

## ACTORS

### 5. Engage more students, families, communities, and policy actors in the field of student experience

The people SERN gathered input from observed the need to increase engagement of two key groups in the field of student experience in particular: **students, families, and communities**, as well as **policy actors**.

**Students, families, and communities need to be authentically involved in both scholarship and decision-making in education related to student experience.**

**Elevate and resource researchers, especially scholars from minoritized groups, who have demonstrated commitment and skill in equitable relationship-building with students, families, and communities.** Such work takes deep investments of time and expertise and can lengthen times to publication. This should be considered when academic gatekeepers and funders evaluate the proposals and CVs of researchers for funding opportunities, awards, and tenure and promotion.

**Document and share [case studies and examples of authentic partnerships](#)** among students, families, and communities, and researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Use these examples to build understanding of these types of partnerships, including how trust, respect, and shared power are essential to their success.

**Invest in training and ongoing professional learning focused on how to involve students, families, and communities in ways that are engaging and share power** across multiple aspects of your work and across the lifecycle of projects and initiatives (i.e., from conceptualization to implementation, and through analysis and measurement of impact).

**Partner with student, family, and community organizations in agenda-setting and decision-making related to student experience** across the domains of research, practice, policy, and funding, and at local, regional, state, and national levels.

**We also heard a need to expand the engagement of policy actors in the field of student experience.**

**Connect student experience to the outcomes policy actors care about and the problems they are seeking to solve.**

**Partner with and fund policy actors to support them in gaining exposure to, making sense of, and applying the research on student experience** that is relevant to their topical priorities and the constituencies they serve. This will involve both relationship-building and investments in translational materials that meet the needs of policy actors.

**Support policy actors to engage with the research themselves as part of efforts they are leading** (e.g., policy proposals, coalition-building). Offer connections to researchers who can provide guidance, feedback, and learn about policy actors' needs and processes.

**Funders inform the work of policy actors in various ways. Funders – and those who are connected to them – can use these routes to elevate student experience with policy actors.**